OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO WEIGHT LOSS

Finding Your Keys to Success!

Lauren Thomas M.S., R.D., L.D.

301-295-6649

LAThomas@bethesda.med.navy.mil

Why Is Weight Control So Difficult?

- Discouraging statistics and high relapse rates
- You may have lost weight on a diet but had trouble keeping the weight off
- You may “know what to do” but have a hard time doing it
- Most of us struggle with many different barriers that prevent behavior changes for weight loss

Barriers to Weight Loss

- Environmental/Cultural
- Genetic
- Activity
- Attitudinal
- Nutrition Knowledge
- Motivational
- “Keys” to overcoming barriers

Environmental/Cultural Barriers

- High calorie food is everywhere!
- Not only in supermarkets but at gas stations, in office buildings, at every corner as fast food, on TV, in vending machines, convenience stores
- Inexpensive, convenient and super-sized!

Environmental/Cultural Barriers

- Hurried lifestyle
- Juggling multiple roles
- Less time for meal planning and cooking
- Frequent skipped meals
- Leads to unwise food choices

Activity Barriers

- Work long hours
- Sedentary jobs
- Multiple roles
- Lots of stress
- Little time and energy for physical activity

Attitudinal Barriers

- Expectations of a “Quick-Fix” society
- Weight loss should be easy
- Progress should be fast and painless
- “Have your cake and eat it too!”

Nutrition Knowledge Barriers

- Conflicting and confusing nutrition and dietary advice from too many sources
- How can a person make sense of it all?
- Look to health professionals especially dietitians who are the nutrition experts

Motivational Barriers

- Transferring knowledge into behavior change often requires a “spark” or motivation
- That “spark” is the power that fuels the inner commitment needed for the process of behavior change for weight loss

Motivational Barriers

- The Stages of Change Model incorporates the steps a person can take to reach that level of inner commitment
- What motivates is different for each person
- It may take several attempts at weight loss for success. Each attempt teaches a lesson

Genetic Barriers

- About 40% of our body weight is determined by our genetics. This includes body type
- About 60% of our body weight is determined by our diet and activity habits
- “Genes load the gun, the environment pulls the trigger.”
  -Obesity researcher George Bray

Some Keys to Success

- Learning new habits takes time and work
- We'll review some "keys" or suggestions
- Choose one or two to focus on
- When successful at those-add another key

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- The Bottom Line
- IF Calories in > activity out = weight gain
- The Atkins, South Beach and other diets produce weight loss because certain food groups are limited and this reduces calorie intake

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- There is NO EVIDENCE to support claims that one particular food group, like carbohydrates, is the cause for weight gain
- All excess calories eaten, from protein, fat and alcohol, are turned into fat

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- There is NO RESEARCH to support that foods high on the glycemic index (body's blood sugar response to foods) are the culprits in weight gain
- There is NO RESEARCH on the long-term effects of the Atkins diet on health. Too much saturated fat is known to cause heart disease

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Most diets can help you lose weight
- A recent study comparing four popular diets found that after one year all dieters lost about the same amount of weight =10 lbs.
- The problem is that diets don't teach you how to KEEP THE WEIGHT OFF!

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Dieters make temporary often drastic changes in their eating habits that are not maintainable
- Dieters mistake: “Once I lose the weight I can go back to my old habits”
- Changing your eating and activity habits PERMANTENTLY is one of the “keys”

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Good points from the South Beach diet:
  - Our bodies don’t need more protein but eating more lean protein foods might help people feel fuller longer and reduce in between meal snacking
  - Eating more healthful fats that are monounsaturated like canola oil, olive oil and nuts may also increase satiety and health

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Complex carbohydrates: 50-60% of calories
  - Whole grain breads, cereals, brown rice, whole wheat pasta are healthy and low in calories
  - Fruits, vegetables and salads are high in fiber, very low in calories and are filling.
  - F&V also contain phytochemicals. Special nutrients that can reduce risk of cancer and heart disease.
  - Any diet that tells you not to eat carrots can’t be on the right track

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Planning is more important than willpower!
  - Eat on a regular schedule to control your appetite
  - Plan meals and snacks
  - Buy the foods you need for the week including lean meats, starches, fruits, vegetables and healthy snacks

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- P-C-F Rule
  - P is for lean protein
  - C is for complex carbohydrate
  - F is for a little fat

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Eating the P-C-F way
  - Eat lean protein, complex carbohydrates and a small amount of fat at meals
  - This way of eating maintains an even blood sugar throughout the day and promotes fullness
  - Plan healthful snacks for in between such as fruit, a handful of nuts, a low-fat yogurt

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Foods eaten out contain more calories, saturated fat and sodium than foods you prepare at home
- The more a person eats out the more likely they are to be overweight.
- Choose smaller portions
- Eat out less often -prepare and control your own food

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Change what you eat one meal at a time
- Start with breakfast
- First, do you eat breakfast? Good choices:
  - Whole grain cereal, 1% milk, fruit
  - Low-fat yogurt and whole grain bread or cereal
  - A hard-boiled egg and toast with lite margarine

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- Take meals and snacks to work
- For lunch: turkey, tuna or ham sandwiches, frozen entrees or leftovers
- Bring fruit, pretzels, low-fat yogurt, nuts or other low-fat snacks to work

Keys: Nutrition Knowledge

- For Dinners
  - Identify easy, healthful recipes that can be prepared quickly
  - You don’t have to sacrifice taste- experiment
  - Resources: “Cooking Light” or “Eating Well” magazines. Cookbooks written by registered dietitians
  - Cook in quantity on the weekends- chili, hearty soups or stews

Keys: Motivation/Attitude

- Knowledge about “what to do” is not enough to motivate behavior change
- A person’s readiness is influenced by their perception of the IMPORTANCE of making the change and their LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE to make the changes needed to be successful

Keys: Motivation/Attitude

- In order to increase the IMPORTNACE level to motivate someone we can provide information such as:
  - About 50% of all deaths in the U.S. are linked to behaviors that can be changed
  - Many people find the “motivation” after they develop a medical or orthopedic condition
  - Don’t wait. More barriers to overcome

Keys: Motivation/Attitude

- We can also use the concept of Body Mass Index as an IMPORTANCE motivator. Ask the question “Is your weight healthy?”
- Body Mass Index
  - Uses weight for height
  - See chart

Keys: Motivation/Attitude

- A BMI of 25-30 is overweight. Weight puts you at an increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer
- A BMI of 30 or more is obese. Weight puts you at a significantly greater risk of chronic health problems

Keys: Motivation/Attitude

- Other Questions to ask to increase IMPORTANCE:
  - Do you feel your best? Do you look your best?
  - Do you have plenty of energy?
  - Have your parents developed chronic illnesses?
  - Are you setting an example for your children? If you don’t do something now will your weight continue to increase?

Keys: Motivation/Attitude

- Another common barrier is how to find the balance between " INDULGENCE and RESTRAINT"
- You don't have to deprive yourself of all the foods you like. Eat these foods less often and in smaller quantities
- Taste buds change-crave less sweets & fats
- Appetites adjust to smaller portions
- As you see results it will reinforce your new behaviors

Keys: Motivation/Attitude

- Be Patient-Don’t expect fast results
- Be Practical- Take it one step at a time. Remember how long it took you to get where you are
- Be Positive: Feel good about the steps you are making
- Don’t beat yourself up! No Matter What!

Keys: Increasing Activity

- Diet can only go so far
- You must increase your activity for weight loss success
- This will greatly improve how you feel,your energy and your health
- Routine activity is harder to incorporate but has a more long lasting effect on weight

Keys: Increasing Activity

- Add aerobic exercise- walking, biking, aerobics, swimming, tennis, jogging at least 3 days a week
- Increase to 5 or more days for weight loss
- Add resistance training
- Start slowly and progress gradually
- Add activity into your day – walk to the metro instead of drive, take the stairs

Keys: Increasing Activity

- Develop activities or hobbies that will keep you active, an unlikely example, bird watching
- Walk places with your children or as a family
- Walk on your lunch break with friends

Keys: Environmental

- Many weight control experts believe that environmental changes are much more powerful in promoting weight loss than teaching people about individual choices
- Look in your local community, your workplace or children's school for ways to promote healthy eating and activity

Keys: Environmental

- Some communities have gotten together to promote changes in their communities:
  - Building more sidewalks, if needed
  - Putting in walking paths
  - Making it safe for children to walk to school (parents may walk with children)
  - Looking at the school lunch program, vending machines and activity programs

Keys to Success for Weight Loss

- Change your habits. Don’t go on a diet
- Accept that change happens more slowly than we want.
- Remember the more slowly you lose weight by making lifestyle change the more permanent the weight loss will be

Keys to Success for Weight Loss

- Be patient and objective with yourself
- Be positive and coach yourself
- Look at other benefits – not just the scale
- Be persistent and don’t give up until you reach your goal.